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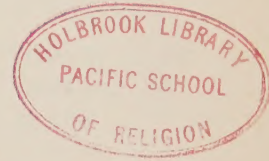
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under the auspices of

the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (in process of formation)
the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 10

Fourteenth Year

March 14, 1947

Delegation to the Greek and Near Eastern Orthodox Churches

The delegation recently sent out by the World Council of Churches to the Orthodox Churches of Greece and the Near East (see E.P.S.No.4), has returned well satisfied with the success of its mission. Its purpose was to discuss the continued cooperation of those Churches with the ecumenical movement by being represented at the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948. Favourable replies were received from the Church of the Kingdom of Greece, from a select committee of the Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, from the Patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria and from the Coptic Patriarchate in Egypt.

Political unrest made it impossible for the delegation to visit the Patriarchate of Jerusalem; in Cyprus, no formal decision was possible until the election of a new Archbishop and Synod, but the delegation was cordially received by the Metropolitan of Kyrenia in the absence of the 'locum tenens', the Metropolitan of Paphos (whom the delegation saw in London), both of whom assured their support.

The delegation also met representatives of the Syrian Jacobite Church, of the Armenian Church and of many missionary and cooperative groups in the areas they visited, particularly in Cairo, and were given many opportunities to study the religious activities and difficulties in those areas. A full report is being prepared to be presented to the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, which will meet in the United States in April. E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

2000 Missionaries Return to the Far East

Since September 1946, over 1600 missionaries, representing some 50 Canadian and American boards, have sailed for the Orient on the S.S. Marine Lynx and the S.S. Marine Adler. These ships have made four trips in all: one in September, two in December, and the last one in February, 1947. This important cooperative endeavor among the various denominational mission boards and societies in North America has been taking place under the auspices of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. By including all modes of transportation - airplane,



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freighter, etc. - the grand total comes close to some 2000 missionaries reaching the FarEast within the space of a short six months.

E.P.S. Geneva

INDIA

Christians in the New India

Dr. John Matthai, a member of the Syrian (Mar Thoma) Church and Minister of Transport in the Interim Government of India, recently presided at a meeting of the All-India Christian Conference. In the course of his address he said:

"Indian Christianity had a history behind it of at least 1500 years and many times during its long and chequered past, its leaders had fought hard for their freedom in spiritual and ecclesiastical matters. The record of the Indian Church in this respect was not sufficiently known or recognized, which probably accounted for the allegations often made against it.

"As a community, he felt that Christians in India had no reason to be unduly apprehensive of the future. They claimed no special privileges and asked for no special favors. All that they demanded was that, whatever changes occurred in the location and organization of political power in India, there would be no attempt by those in authority to differentiate against them and invade their fundamental rights as citizens."

Dr. Matthai said that in the present difficult times Christians in India had a special responsibility which, he hoped, they would make every endeavor to fulfil. That responsibility briefly was that, in pursuit of the Christian ideal, they would regard themselves primarily as servants of the country and so organize their resources as to be a spear-head of national service.

"They would do so, added Dr. Matthai, not in any spirit of self-righteousness, or moral superiority, but in that humble spirit in which their Master trod the earth and laboured for His fellow-men. There were two matters which particularly demanded their attention and for which they should fit themselves. The first was to heal the wounds and soften the asperities which existed in the body politic. The other was to work for the removal of the appalling want which was the lot of the great majority of their fellow-countrymen. In these two directions, there was enough work for them to do for, perhaps, the whole space of a generation."

E.P.S. Geneva

BRAZIL

The Future of the Evangelical Churches

A conference on general Christian literature was held in Rio de Janeiro from February 6 to 15, 1947, convened by the Council of Religious Education of the Confederation of Evangelical Churches of Brazil. The Committee of Cooperation in Latin America (Representing the mission boards at work in Latin America) and the Committee on World Literature and Christian Literacy of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America were interested in being of service, as was the World's Sunday School Association. Dr. F. Foster Stockwell, President of the Union Seminary in Buenos Aires, was present by special invitation because of his experience in connection with the production of Christian literature for Spanish-speaking countries.

The Conference studied various aspects of the religious education programme, such as the Christian home, hymnology, preparation of workers, religious teaching in public schools.

Two important points stood out: the teaching of religion in public schools permitted by the new constitution and the founding of a Protestant university in Rio. The Methodists have been given a piece of property for such a university

but the general feeling was that it should be a cooperative rather than a denominational venture.

It was also decided to form a "Central Committee for Christian Literature" under the Confederation. Large tasks were outlined for this Committee, its functions to include a survey of literature now available in Portuguese, arrangement for production of new materials, and widespread promotion of reading. The problem of illiteracy also received attention. The Government of Brazil is just launching an extensive campaign, using an adaptation of the Laubach method.

On the whole the impression was that the Evangelical Church is well established in Brazil and that it is one of the great mission fields of the world today.

E.P.S. Geneva

The Reconstruction Department at Work

Besides information concerning the conference on Evangelism which brought together delegates from 14 different countries (see E.P.S. Nos. 5 & 6), the February report of the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches reveals a number of striking facts on its activity.

Transport is one of them. Twenty new cars were bought by the Division of Material Aid to go to various countries. Many letters received emphasise the great help which bicycles sent during the last months have supplied. From Oldenburg in Germany, where the Hilfswerk has received a lady's bicycle as a gift of the World Council, they write: "This gift reminds us in our daily service of the connection with Ecumenicity, and comforts and cheers us". From a minister in Czechoslovakia: "Your bicycle will be a great help in my work. I am the vicar in a mountain church, with 87 communities. Every week I must cover 180 km to attend Bible classes and services. God bless those who accomplish this work of love". In Poland, 32 bicycles have been distributed between 11 denominations.

As to literature, 1500 tons of pulp have been bought in Sweden to be used in Germany. Half the cost will be paid by the American Section of the Lutheran World Federation, the other half, probably, by the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and Evangelical and Reformed Churches through Church World Service. Requests for paper are swarming in. The rough estimate for only five countries (not including Germany) is 1000 tons. Request has come from Poland for one million Bibles and one million New Testaments.

Among the countries to which the Department has sent help in form of money, food and all sorts of goods, the case of Roumania is striking. After a period of preparation, it has been possible to enter into this country and to bring help to the Churches in their great need, although only SwFr. 15,000 of the 100,000 SwFr. validated by the Committee in December could be sent. One of the Church leaders writes: "In the first place we should like to thank you for the gift of money... and for the food you sent to us. All these gifts were received with a joy and a gratitude which can hardly be expressed in words. The food was distributed to 38 pastors' families and 14 teachers, 142 persons in all... In our daily prayers we think of those who have helped us, and we do not forget the duties which, as recipients of these gifts, are placed upon us". The letter closes with these words: "We are laying great emphasis on evangelization. What has been done so far was richly blessed by the Lord. If he will send us the resources, much can be done for the reconstruction of our churches".

As to material aid, the expenditure of the Reconstruction Department amounting to 600,000 dollars for child feeding in six different countries is now virtually completed.

Ecumenical Giving - In answer to an inquiry from the Department, answers from several countries show that receiving Committees are as anxious as the Department itself that more and more ecumenical ways should replace the old denominational ones. For instance Pastor Traar from Austria writes: "...The fact that these gifts are sent without any consideration of confessional limits has been a great encouragement and will more and more strengthen our faith. In our Catholic country we have always suffered from the mockery of the Catholic Church reproaching us for the lack of unity which she possesses in Rome. The fact that the Protestant Churches and Church groups of America are acting unanimously and are coordinating their gifts in one organization which is filling our hearts and our hands, seems to be a public confession of the community of the evangelical Church throughout the world. This produces a great impression among us Austrians." E.P.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R.Theological Education

On October 14, 1946 in Leningrad next to the already existing Theological Seminary, the Theological Academy was opened by Patriarch Alexis. As the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" (No. 10, 1946) reports, Metropolitan Gregory declared: "Teachers and pupils are aware of the great responsibility of the new Academy as successor to the former Academy in Petrograd which produced so many notable theologians as a blessing to the Russian Orthodox Church". Now the aim is "to reach and surpass the former high education standard of the academically trained priesthood". In consideration of the rules of the past and avoiding the danger of committing the mistake of mere scholastic thinking as regards theoretical Christianity, theological consciousness is to become a vital power upon evangelical basis. "The future priests as bearers of faith are to announce the truth and to be Christian patriotic citizens."

Altogether 80 new candidates had applied to the Seminary and the Academy for the winter semester 1946/47 and 52 (36 at the Seminary and 16 at the Academy) were accepted. The total of students is 74. The opening meeting of the Academy closed with a lecture on "The last chapter in the life and achievements of Grand Duke Alexander Nevsky and his relations to the Tartars".

The Theological Academy in Mosco operates also together with the Theological Seminary. Here the number of candidates admitted for the commencement examination reached more than 200, ninety seven taken over by the Seminary and 3 by the Academy. Including former participants, the number of students in the Seminary is 147 and in the Academy 14. For the first time in Moscow a few professors from abroad are giving lectures as guests, among them Father Poltorazki of the St. Denis Institute in Paris. The Inspector of the Academy and the Seminary Professor N.W. Tshepurin stated in his speech at the beginning of the academic year: "Our former academies, following the theological example of West-European countries, made far too much room for human reasoning, the claims of which concerning dogmatic truths must decidedly be rejected... On the contrary, we should at last understand that reasoning only thrives in the obedience of the faith. The highest aims of Orthodoxy require that each one of us in accordance with the reasoning of the Holy Church does creative work, and through their own religious experiences unveils the life-giving secret of Orthodoxy". To this end, the most important thing is to let the old books make way for new ones. E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYThe Confessing Church Recognized as Resistance Movement

The question how far the collaboration in the Confessing Church is to be valued as a point of favour in the denazification procedures, is occupying the courts. Now that the Confessing Church has expressly been recognized in a number of court decisions as being a Resistance Movement, the Supreme Court of Appeal in the Bavarian State Ministry for Special Tasks has declared that the Confessing

Church must be recognized as a Resistance Movement in accordance with article 39/II/2. This article of the "Order for Exemption from National Socialism and Militarism" determines that in connection with decisions in a denazification procedure, the following is in favour of the person concerned: "Traceable collaboration with a Resistance Movement or with other movements working against the National Socialistic despotism, if such movement was based upon anti-National Socialistic and anti-militaristic motives".

GERMANY

A Consultative Church Assembly

Besides the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany(EKID), a Church Assembly of the Evangelical Church in Germany is to be arranged as an advisory body. The legal foundation for this is supplied by an order issued by the Council of the Evangelical Church during its last meeting in Treysa on January 24, 1947. The Church Assembly consists of about 90 representatives of church bodies. Furthermore, Council members belong to it who were chosen from the Synods and who should partly be laymen and be sent from the regional Churches in accordance with a certain procedure. In addition to this there are 20 persons of various aspects of Church life. The Church Assembly has only advisory and no decisive functions.

Of importance in the "Order concerning a Church Assembly of the EKID" is furthermore paragraph 10:

"If a member of the Church Assembly raises an objection against a proposal because it goes against his Lutheran, Reformed or United (Old Prussian Union) confession, members of his confessional group or the members of Churches of a corresponding confession get together for a special discussion. If the convention confirms the objection, no decision is reached."

The rules of paragraph 10 correspond to the practice derived from Reich Synods of the Confessing Church since 1936 which allows various confessional groups a special conference and at the same time prevents that a confessional majority outvotes a minority.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Church Committee on German Peace Settlement

Formation of a committee on peace settlement with Germany has been authorized by the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace of the Federal Council of Churches. Under the chairmanship of Professor John Bennett of Union Theological Seminary, the committee will study problems of the German peace settlement and will make recommendations to the Commission.

E.P.S. Geneva

PACIFIC ISLANDS

United Protestant Mission Work

The Foreign Missions Conference of North America has decided to establish a united Protestant missionary work on Okinawa Island. This is a major step towards fulfilling the desire of many Christian leaders both in the United States and overseas to conduct Protestant foreign mission activities on an interdenominational rather than a denominational basis. The project was first proposed by a small group of native Christians on Okinawa Island to American chaplains who served there during the war.

Tentative plans call for the sending of a small staff of missionaries and workers to Okinawa to serve as Protestants with no specific denominational label.

The present governor of Okinawa, Shikiya Koshin, as well as other leading Okinawans, have expressed the need for mission work on the island "as there is a

religious neutrality and apathy on the island that is probably unequalled in any other place in the world".

DENMARKNordic Ecumenical Conference

A number of members of the Nordic ecumenical movement have been gathering in Copenhagen from February 12 to 16, 1947 in order to discuss Nordic ecumenical problems. Among those present were Pastor Nils Ehrenstrom, director of the Study Department of the World Council of Churches.

The business committee of the Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna, under the leadership of its director Dr. Harry Johansson, planned the future Nordic ecumenical gatherings for the coming year, as well as the conference which will be held at the end of May at Liselund, in Denmark, on the subject of Church and secularization.

Furthermore, discussions took place in Copenhagen in a committee which has been appointed to plan a collective publication dealing with ecumenical questions in the Northern countries. This book will form part of the publications to be issued in 1947 by the four international commissions set up by the Study Department at Geneva to prepare the first Assembly of the World Council in Amsterdam in 1948. These questions arouse a lively interest in the Nordic countries, while at the same time great stress is placed on inter-Scandinavian cooperation.

E.P.S. Geneva

PORTO RICODevelopment of Rural Work

The Home Mission Council of North America has sponsored a significant project in Porto Rico directed towards helping the rural Churches of that crowded island. A group of 10 Christian leaders, five from the Continent, headed by Mark Dawber, General Secretary of the Home Mission Council, and five Porto Ricans, have made an extended journey across the island. As a result of this week of contact and deliberation, Rev. Richard Johnson, a Methodist pastor, with rural training, has been placed at the disposal of the Churches as coordinator of rural work. He will help the pastors take advantage of the facilities offered by the Government and by social agencies in an effort to raise the level of living among these people. Much publicity has been given to this project, which should have far reaching influence on similar areas in Latin America.

E.P.S. Geneva

AUSTRIASchool Prayers

Concerning the question of school prayers, the Evangelical Church Council has sent a petition to the Board of Education in Vienna asking that "school prayers should be held in a form which expressed the common religious heritage of all the confessions recognized in Austria and represented in the school... and that teachers should not use prayers of a definitely confessional character (prayers to the Virgin), but of a generally Christian character.

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religious nationality and agency as the latter is probably unqualified in any other place in the world.

World Evangelical Conference

Introduction

A number of members of the World Evangelical Conference have been gathering in Copenhagen from February 15 to 18, 1957 in order to discuss World Evangelical problems. Among those present were Pastor Eric Ekstrand, Director of the Study Department of the World Council of Churches.

The business committee of the Evangelical Institute in Elsinore, under the leadership of the Director Dr. Harry Johnson, planned the first World Evangelical Conference for the coming year, as well as the conference which will be held at the end of May in Iceland, in Denmark, on the subject of Church and Socialism.

Furthermore, discussion took place in Copenhagen in a committee which has been appointed to plan a collective publication dealing with evangelistic questions in the Northern countries. This work will form part of the publication to be issued in 1959 by the four international associations set up by the Study Department at Geneva to prepare the first Assembly of the World Council in Amsterdam in 1962. These questions concern a lively interest in the World Council, while at the same time great stress is placed on inter-Christian cooperation.

E. P. S. Gervais

Development of Rural Work

REPORT FROM

The Home Mission Council of North America has sponsored a significant project in Porto Rico directed towards helping the rural churches of that island. A group of 10 Christian leaders, from the Council, headed by Mark Dwyer, General Secretary of the Home Mission Council, and five Porto Ricans, have made an extensive journey across the island. As a result of this work of contact and discussion, Rev. Richard Johnson, a Methodist pastor, with rural training, has been placed at the disposal of the Churches as co-ordinator of rural work. He will help the pastors take advantage of the facilities offered by the Government and by social agencies in an effort to raise the level of living among these people. This publicity has been given to this project, which should have far-reaching influence on similar work in Latin America.

E. P. S. Gervais

Religious Freedom

CONCLUSION

Concerning the position of school property, the Evangelical Church Council has sent a petition to the Board of Education in Vienna asking that school property should be held in a form which expressed the common religious heritage of all the confessions represented in Austria and represented in the school... and that teachers should not use property of a definitely confessional character (property in the church), but of a generally Christian character.

E. P. S. Gervais